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CLERICAL WORKERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD
WHITE COLLAR UNIONS

by

Gerald Thomas O'Neill

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Institute of Social and
Industrial Relations of Loyola University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Social and
Industrial Relations

June

1959

LIFE

Gerald Thomas O'Neill was born in Chicago, Illinois, November 12, 1931.

He was graduated from Mount Carmel High School, Chicago, Illinois, June, 1950, and from Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, February, 1954, with a degree of Bachelor of Science.

For two years the author served in the United States Army as a Personnel Officer at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Upon completion of active duty, he was employed by the United States Steel Corporation in the Industrial Engineering Division in the Corporation's South Works. He began his graduate studies at Loyola University in February, 1956.

PREFACE

Any research project requires more than the efforts of the researcher. In this case special thanks are due my wife Jo Ann for her understanding and co-operation. In addition, thanks are also due my father, the placement counselor at the high school where this study was made.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
<p>I. INTRODUCTION</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Statement of the problem--Definitions--Extent of the problem--Characteristics of the clerical work force--Extent of unionization--Causes of unionization--Limits of the study--Previous investigations--Sources used--Methods used--Historical aspect of the white collar worker.</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>II. DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Description of Group A--Description of Group B --Advantages of the sample--Disadvantages of the sample.</p>	<p>16</p>
<p>III. ATTITUDES OF THE SAMPLE</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The questionnaire--Permanence in the work force --Work satisfaction-- General attitudes toward unions--Specific attitudes toward white collar unions--Attitude background.</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Review of the findings--General conclusions--Further research--Future organization.</p>	<p>39</p>
<p>APPENDIX I</p>	<p>46</p>
<p>APPENDIX II</p>	<p>49</p>
<p>BIBLIOGRAPHY</p>	<p>50</p>

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. WAGE DISTRIBUTION, GROUP A	20
II. DEGREE OF WORK FORCE PERMANENCE OF THE SAMPLE .	27
III. DEGREE OF WORK SATISFACTION OF THE SAMPLE . . .	30
IV. GENERAL ATTITUDES OF THE SAMPLE TOWARD LABOR UNIONS.	32
V. DEGREE OF APPROVAL OF WHITE COLLAR UNIONS . . .	35

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. PER CENT OF WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE BY AGE . .	15
2. EMPLOYMENT DISTRIBUTION, GROUP A.	19

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

White collar workers are the fastest growing segment of the American labor force. They are also the largest single group of workers that remains outside the ranks of organized labor. Many conflicting reasons have been suggested by unions, employers, sociologists, and others in an effort to explain why white collar unionization has lagged behind the organization of industrial workers. Yet little research has been done in this area.

Statement of the Problem

The reasons why white collar workers seemingly reject labor unions have been placed in four categories.

(1) Status. White collar workers possess a certain status manual workers do not have. This status stems from longer years of education coupled with a certain native ability. They work more closely with management and assume a kind of mental management status. They feel they can more effectively forge ahead on individual merit, rather than collective action, to reach higher positions.

(2) Identification. White collar workers, because of their close contact with management, have a stronger identification with company views and policies. They feel that they

are essentially directing the enterprise rather than being directed.

(3) Satisfaction. White collar workers are seemingly satisfied with their wages, hours, and working conditions. Rarely do they suffer widespread cyclical unemployment.

(4) Temporary Employment. Approximately fifty per cent of the white collar labor force are women, many who consider their employment as temporary.

These reasons for non-unionization of white collar workers consider white collar attitudes and motivations, and the nature of their work. "The new middle class,"¹ as white collar workers have been called, seem to reject labor unions because they feel they have a certain dignity as workers which is lacking in other areas of the American labor force.

This thesis explores the attitudes toward unions of a portion of the white collar labor force; namely, young women clerical workers. It attempts to reduce the broad generalities stated above by testing the specific opinions possessed by the young women clerical workers. An evaluation of these opinions will be made, an attitude established, if one exists, and conclusions will be reached.

Definitions

Because of the nature of this research into an area so

¹C. Wright Mills, White Collar, The New Middle Class (New York, 1951), p. 1.

popularized by labor, management, and news media, it is important to define the terms used in this thesis. The following include the most important concepts contained herein.

White Collar Worker is a term used to describe office and clerical employees in administrative, sales, professional and technical departments, as contrasted with production and maintenance employees, who are sometimes referred to as "blue collar workers."²

White Collar Union is a term used to distinguish those lab or unions that are made up of white collar workers, as opposed to union organizations of manual workers in the craft of industrial areas of organized labor.

Clerical and Kindred Workers are secretaries, bookkeepers, office machine operators, file clerks, typists, and related personnel. In the text of this thesis, this group will be referred to as clerical workers, clerical employees, or office workers.

Attitude is a state of mind which exerts a directive, if not compulsive influence on an individual's behavior. An attitude is always characterized by an object, a direction, and an intensity. The object in this study is white collar unions. The direction and intensity of the attitude will be measured

²U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, A Guide to Labor-Management Relations in the United States, No. 1225 (Washington, 1958), p. 29

herein.

Opinion is the specific interpretation of some event, object, or behavior. In other words the opinion of a person is an interpretation of what he experiences. An opinion is influenced partly by what has occurred (the facts) and partly by the person's attitude. The relationship between opinions, facts, and attitudes can be expressed as follows: attitudes plus facts form the opinion. It is important to note that an opinion is preceded and influenced by facts and attitudes. Opinions, then, do not lead to attitudes; opinions reflect attitudes and attitudes can be detected from expressed opinions.³

Extent of the Problem

Statistical analysis of the white collar group is difficult because the data available is often non-comparable and in many cases incomplete. Standard reference materials do not display data in terms of employment in specific white collar positions, but rather in terms of employment by specific industry. It is the intention here to give a general impression of both the number and proportion of white collar workers in the American labor force and to show the degree of unionization of this group.

White collar workers numbered approximately twenty-one

³Norman R.F. Maier, Psychology in Industry (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1955), pp. 52-53.

million persons⁴ in 1950. This accounted for thirty-seven per cent of the employed civilian labor force during that year. The white collar work force is made up of the following five broad categories.⁵

(1) Professional, technical, and kindred workers. This group is usually salaried. It totals 4.2 million people and includes people in such occupations as accounting, engineering, chemistry, teaching, and nursing.

(2) Clerical and kindred workers. This is the largest group of white collar workers. Its members number approximately 6.8 million people. It is composed primarily of the many different office jobs held by persons of varying degrees of skill and experience.

(3) Sales workers. The sales worker group includes 3.4 million workers. It is composed of those people who sell the goods and services of the economy.

(4) Salaried managers and officials. This group totals 2.4 million people. It is comprised of the managerial personnel in government and business.

(5) Self-employed and unpaid family workers. This group totals 3.8 million workers and includes those self-employed professionals and independent proprietors.

⁴ Jean A. Flexner and Anna-Stina Ericson, "White Collar Employment and Income", Monthly Labor Review, (April, 1955) p 401.

⁵ Ibid

Characteristics of the Clerical Work Force ⁶

At this point, it might be well to pause and consider some of the predominant characteristics of the white collar clerical work force. Much of what will be said here might apply to the white collar work force in general. However, these remarks are pertinent to an understanding of the problem to be studied.

There are four main characteristics of the clerical work force.

(1) The male-female ratio. Approximately 4.2 million ⁷ women are employed in the clerical work force. Women comprise sixty-two per cent of this group. Many reasons have been advanced to explain why women are attracted to clerical occupations. Because of the suitability of clerical work for women and their willingness to work for somewhat lower salaries than men, women become clerical workers. In addition, the lower threshold requirements with regard to skill and experience allow women to enter and re-enter the clerical labor market.

⁶ Much of the material in the following paragraphs has been taken from Professor Robert K. Burns' study of "The White Collar Worker in the American Economy," printed for private circulation in 1950 by the Industrial Relations Center, University of Chicago. This material has been supplemented with current data from other sources, as footnoted.

⁷ Flexner and Ericson, p. 401.

(2) Marital status. Approximately one-fourth of the women clerical workers, or one and one-quarter million women, are married. There is a marked tendency for single women to be concentrated in clerical occupations.

(3) Age. The clerical work force has the lowest median age of any of the major occupational groups. Labor market participation for this group reaches its peak between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four.⁸ The median age for all clerical workers is less than thirty years of age.

(4) Employment. Over the long run, clerical workers' employment has far more stability than that of manual workers. Clerical earnings, as a result, have been higher on the average than manual workers' wages. The clerical workers' earnings in recent years have declined below those of manual workers, especially unionized manual workers. Working conditions, on the other hand, are far superior for office workers compared to manual workers.

These characteristics give the white collar clerical worker the previously mentioned status not possessed by the manual worker. The rapid extension of clerical jobs, as described in the succeeding chapter, has produced opportunities for office and clerical workers to move into supervisory or

⁸U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economic Forces in the United States in Facts and Figures, Fifth Edition (Washington, 1957), p. 168.

semi-professional types of work. Truly, then, the characteristics described above distinguish the clerical group from the other groups of the American work force.

Extent of Unionization

Another area where statistical analysis is difficult is the area of white collar unionization. The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently attempted to obtain data on white collar membership in national and international unions.⁹ The Bureau did not expect that an accurate count of white collar membership could be obtained, as quoted below.

"In the first place it is difficult to define white collar work in a general questionnaire so as to take account of all the borderline occupations. Secondly, few, if any, national unions with both blue collar and white collar workers maintain separate records for each group."¹⁰

With these qualifying statements, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates there are 2.5 million white collar workers unionized. This figure represents thirteen per cent of the organizable white collar work force of 18.4 million. The survey goes on to point out the following. "The great bulk of white collar membership was found in unions operating primarily in the retail trade, public service, communications, and

⁹U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Directory of National and International Labor Unions in the United States: 1957, No. 1222 (Washington, 1957), p. 12.

¹⁰Ibid.

transportation, and in the entertainment industry. However, several blue collar unions also reported a substantial number of white collar members, although in each union they represent only a small proportion of the total membership." ¹¹

The number of unionized clerical workers in non-governmental employment has been estimated at 600,000, ¹² or about nine per cent of the total clerical work force. A large proportion of the office workers in the railroad and communications industries are organized. But in such industries as banking, insurance, and real estate the extent of unionization is negligible. "In manufacturing more than 250,000 of the 1.6 million clerical employees are estimated to have joined unions," ¹³ the Bureau of Labor Statistics states.

If this estimate is correct, then only 15.5 per cent of the clerical workers in manufacturing have been organized.

Causes of Unionization

Research into the question of why workers join unions leans on the psychological factors. E. Wight Bakke lists five such factors tending to bring workers into unions. ¹⁴

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Bureau of Labor Statistics, Guide to Labor-Management Relations, p. 4.

¹³Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁴E. Wight Bakke, "Why Workers Join Unions," reprinted from Personnel (XXII, No. 1, 2ff.), in Joseph Shister's Readings in Labor Economics and Industrial Relations (Philadelphia, 1951), p. 31.

They are;

(1) People like to be thought well of by their fellow workers. The social status of workers can be enhanced by being accepted as 'one of the gang'.

(2) Economic security offered by unions and union membership in the form of wages, seniority, and fringe benefits attract young people to unions.

(3) The desire for recognition or power brings and keeps people in unions. The many union offices offer prestige to those who hold such offices.

(4) The desire of the worker to understand the social, economic, and political forces of the industrial world around him.

(5) The union gives a worker a philosophy consistent with his work. In advancing his own interests, the union member does not violate the standards of the shop. Thus a union gives a certain integrity to its members.

The historical psychological reasons for workers' acceptance of unions do not seem to be true of the white collar workers. A reappraisal of organization techniques by unions has met with small success. Unions differ on the approach to the white collar worker. One union leader in this area states:

"Those of us who specialize in the field of white collar unionization recognize the attitude of clerical employees to be something bordering on snobbery. However, we are certain

that it is less difficult to organize clericals along prestige lines than try to make them realize that they are just another segment of the working population."¹⁵

Another union leader seriously interested in organizing clerical workers says:

"I believe firmly that white collar workers have different problems. They come from totally different backgrounds. The physical surroundings in which they work are different. Basically, however, they are workers and as workers, they have the same kind of problems that other workers have in our free society. I believe that they can be organized just as we organized the industrial workers of America."¹⁶

Basically, the acceptance of a union by any worker depends upon the worker's awareness of his problems and his recognition of the union as a means for solving them. To date the white collar worker has not turned in great numbers to the union movement. The causes of white collar unionization, or non-unionization, is the crux of the problem that concerns both labor and management.

¹⁵Address by Howard Coughlin, President, Office Employees' International Union(AFL-CIO), September, 1957. (Place of presentation not given)

¹⁶Address by Walter P. Reuther, President, United Automobile Aircraft, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, February, 1957, Industrial Union Department Conference on White Collar Organization.

Limits of the Study

This thesis is limited to the study of opinions and attitudes of one sample of the white collar work force, namely a group of young women clerical workers. The opinions and attitudes explored are those of this particular group toward labor unions in general and white collar unions in particular.

Psychologists are aware that the attitude of the individual is an important factor in determining the way in which the person will react when faced with a particular situation. Therefore, a knowledge of attitudes will contribute to an understanding of the reaction of people in a certain situation. Here, the sample's reaction to unions and the labor movement is the situation investigated.

Previous Investigations

Despite the many references to clerical workers' attitudes toward unions in popular news media, little research has been done in this area. The author could find no studies specifically dealing with the subject of this thesis: the attitudes of young women clerical employees toward white collar unions.

Sources Used

The background material for this thesis has been taken from various sources and authorities in the field of labor-management relations. These sources, whether directly quoted or not, are footnoted throughout the text.

Methods Used

The attitudes of two groups of clerical workers toward

labor unions were surveyed by means of a questionnaire. (Appendix I). The first group consisted of the senior class of a commercial high school in a large midwestern city of the United States. This group as part of the school program had been working part time in a business office for four months at the time the questionnaire was given. The second group, composed of alumnae of the same school, were girls graduated within the last five years. Both of these groups of girls will be defined in detail in Chapter II.

The questionnaire contains five major sections. Each section deals with a part pertinent to the subject of white collar attitudes toward labor unions. The entire questionnaire is composed of forty-four questions listed on one side of a page. It took the average reader less than fifteen minutes to complete it.

Historical Aspects of the White Collar Worker

One final word by way of introduction to the problem studied here. An extensive history of the white collar worker may be found in White Collar, the New Middle Class by C. Wright Mills. He examines the cultural, political, economic and social changes that have affected the white collar worker in America.

Women's employment has contributed to the phenomenal growth of the clerical work force. The number of employed persons in the entire economy has increased sixty-three per cent since 1910. The white collar work force, on the other hand, has

increased one-hundred and eighty-three per cent during the same period.¹⁷ The fastest growing portion of the white collars has been the clerical group. In one ten year period, 1940-1950, clerical workers increased fifty-seven per cent.¹⁸

Many women are in the labor force only part time or they are in temporary jobs. Figure 1 illustrates a basic change in women's employment that has significance beyond the realm of this study, but also has a significance here.

What the future of the clerical work force will be is now a matter of conjecture. Some observers feel that the steep rate of increase in white collar clerical employment will level off and perhaps decline in face of the automation of office work.¹⁹

¹⁷Burns, p. 24

¹⁸Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economic Forces, p. 36.

¹⁹Flexner and Ericson, p. 402

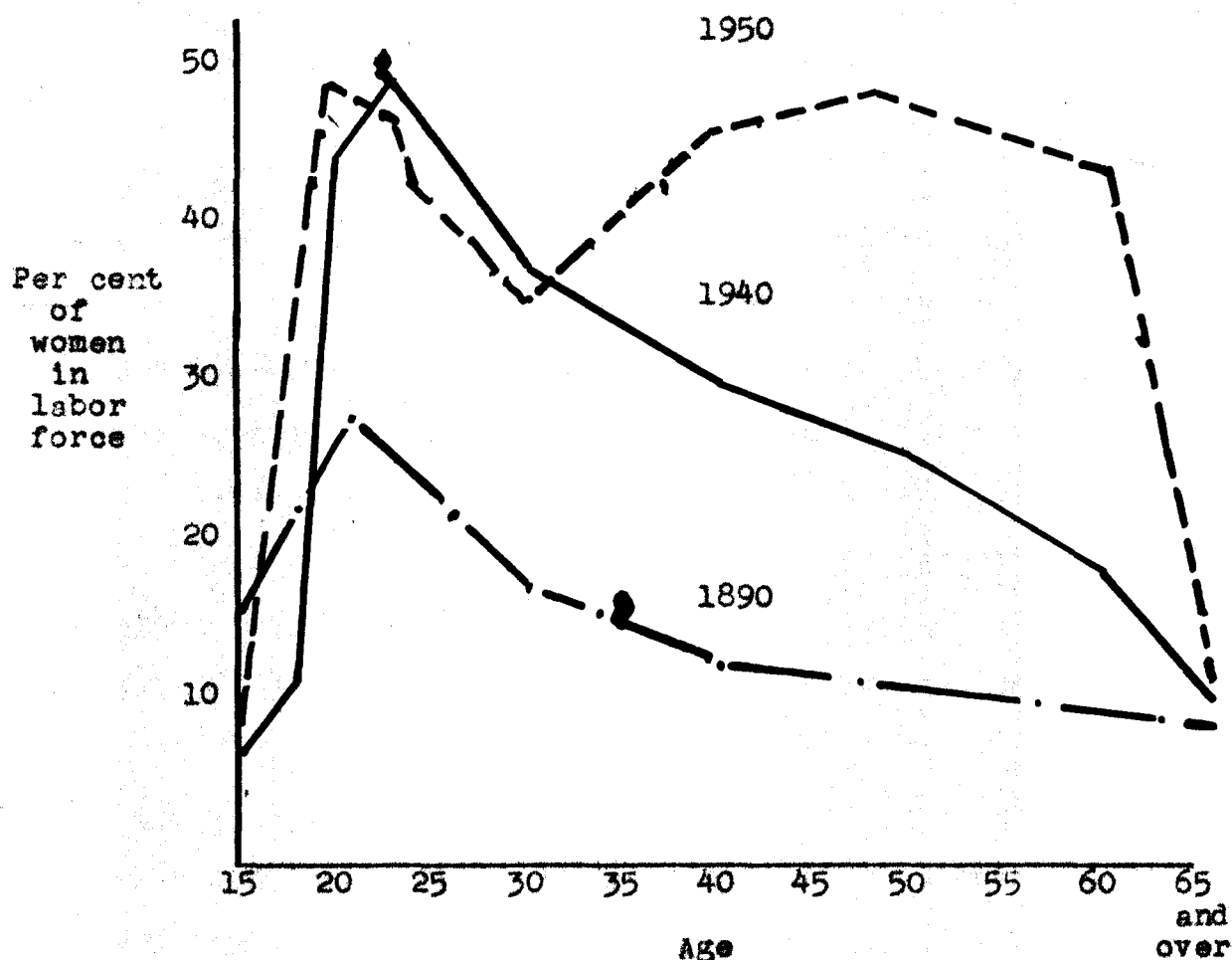


FIGURE 1

PER CENT OF WOMEN IN LABOR FORCE BY AGE

Data for 1890 taken from the 1890 Census Report and is for the age groups 10-24, 15-24, 25-34, 35-45, 45-54 and 65 and over.

Data for 1940 and 1950 are from the Current Population Reports, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Source: Womanpower, National Manpower Council, (New York, N.Y., 1957), p. 19.

CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

The sample chosen for this study consists of two groups of young women employed as clerical workers. The study was conducted in a public high school of a large midwestern city. The first group (Group A) is composed of students of the school. The second group (Group B) consists of alumnae of the school.

The study was taken in a school unique in the city. It is a commercial high school located close to the main business district. Students are admitted only after successful completion of the first two years in another high school. The school's program is designed to teach the students to master one of the several business skills offered in the curriculum.

Students may major in one of the following areas: (1) Bookkeeping, (2) Stenography, (3) Business Machines, and (4) Machine Calculation.

The school has up-to-date equipment commonly used in business offices, including key punch machines, sorting machines, and various other pieces of electronic equipment. The training in specific business skills is augmented by courses in Business English, American History, and Business Law.

Description of Group A

During the last semester at the school each student participates in a training program outside of the school. Companies within the city cooperate with the school administration in this program of on-the-job training. Each girl spends half of the day in school and half of the day in a business office.

✓ Employment for the students is obtained by an employment counsellor at the school. The girl to be hired by a prospective employer has an interview and settles such questions as hours of work, general duties, and pay. If the girl and the employer agree on the general terms of employment, she is hired. The school asks the employers to assign the girl duties in her major area if possible. The employer is also requested to submit a periodic report on the girl's progress to the school, and to offer any constructive ideas for improving the effectiveness of the training program.

Group A of the sample averaged 19.4 hours per week of work during the five month training program. Of the 160 girls in Group A, only three were unemployed at the time the study was taken.

The on-the-job training program has grown since its inception in 1943. No employment fee is charged the employer. The number of companies participating in the program has quadrupled since 1945. Employers of the city now look to the school for well trained office help. As of September 1, 1958, four

months after the study was taken, eighty-four per cent of Group A were still employed by the company where they took their training.

The employment distribution of Group A at the time of the study is shown in Figure 2.

Attitudes that might have been prevalent in a single company or in a single industry tending to distort the validity of the questionnaire have been avoided.

✓ The wages paid Group A during the training program varied according to the type of work and the degree of skill of each member of the Group. Employers that participate in the program are asked to pay their normal beginning hourly rate for new employees. The wage distribution of the group at the time of the study is shown in Table I.¹

Description of Group B

Group B of the sample, or the alumnae group, consisted of a random sampling of five percent graduating classes of the school. The sampling technique used was a selection of every fifth name from an alphabetical listing of each of the following graduating classes:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| (1) June, 1957 | (4) January, 1956 |
| (2) January, 1957 | (5) June, 1955 |
| (3) June, 1956 | |

¹ Table I, p. 20.

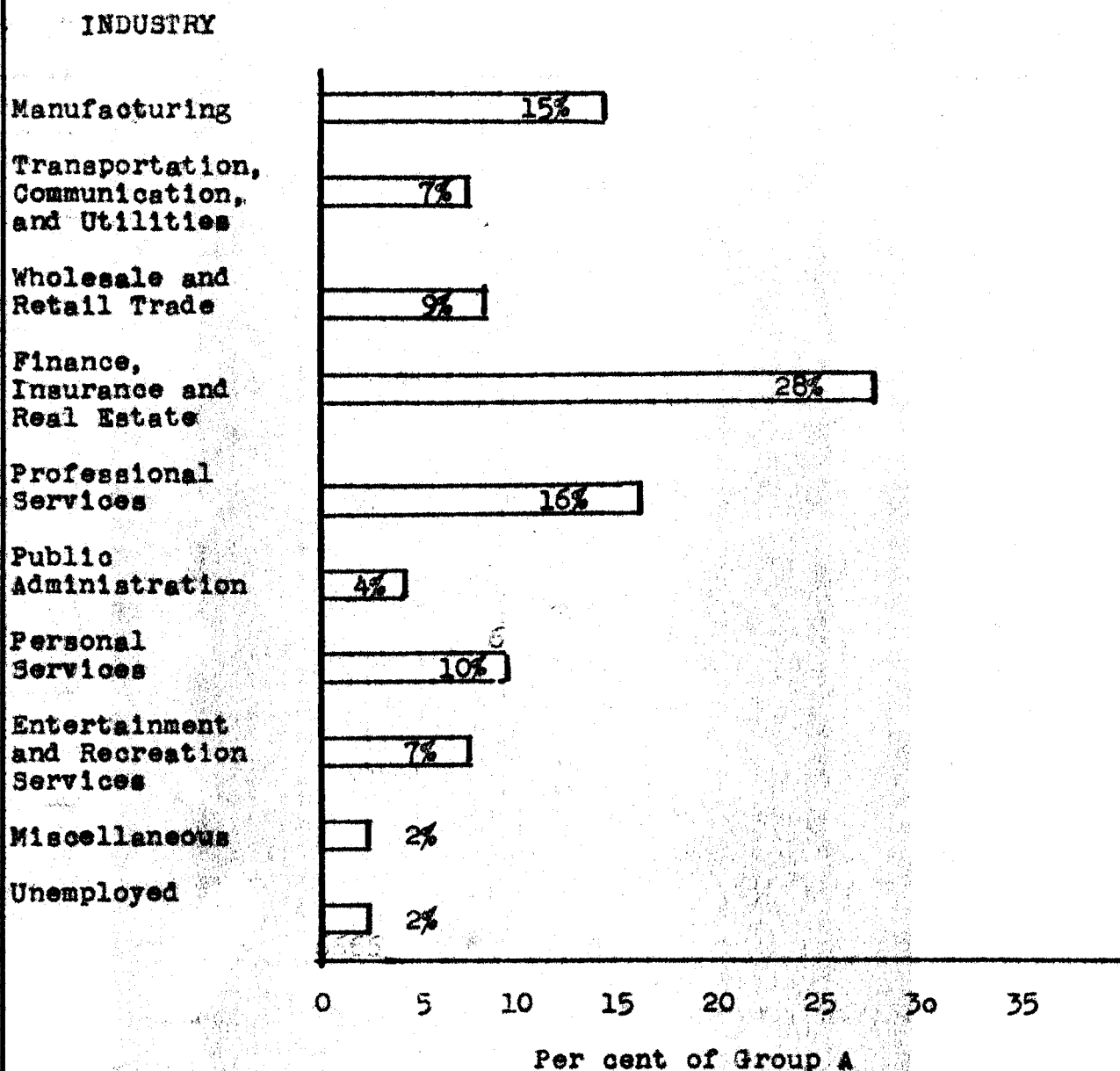


FIGURE 2
EMPLOYMENT DISTRIBUTION, GROUP A

TABLE I
WAGE DISTRIBUTION, GROUP A
PER CENT OF GROUP BY SCHOOL MAJOR

Hourly Rate (Dollars) over incl.	Stenography	Business Machines	Book- keeping	Machine Calcula- tion	Total
1.00	1.1				1.1
1.00 1.10	1.3	.6			1.9
1.10 1.20	2.5	2.5			5.0
1.20 1.30	10.2	5.1	2.5	1.3	19.1
1.30 1.40	10.8	9.6	3.8	.6	24.8
1.40 1.50	19.1	10.2		.6	29.9
1.50 1.60	3.2	5.8	1.9		10.9
1.60 1.70	1.9	1.9			3.8
1.70 1.80	1.3				1.3
Unemployed	2.2				2.2
					100.0

Twenty-one of the thirty-four questionnaires returned were unsigned. Hence a detailed description of the alumnae group that responded was impossible to make.

Advantages of the Sample

The advantages of selecting this sample lay in three principal reasons:

- (1) The sample consisted entirely of young women under

twenty-five years of age who are working in clerical jobs.

(2) The sample includes girls from almost every residential area of the city where the study was taken. A variety of ethnic and economic groups are represented in the sample.

(3) The sample cut across single job lines and single industry lines to include girls who worked in a variety of jobs and industries.

One added purpose for selecting these two groups is to determine if young clerical workers, as they grow older and get more experience in the business world, change their attitudes significantly.

Disadvantages of the Sample

The single disadvantage of selecting this sample is that the greatest portion of the sample had only four months experience in an office. However, since opinions are made up of attitudes as well as facts, this disadvantage was not considered sufficiently grave to discount the construction or validity of the sample.

CHAPTER III

ATTITUDES OF THE SAMPLE

The problem of attitudes is a complex one dependent on many things. In Chapter I an attitude was defined simply as a state of mind which exerts a directive, if not compulsive, influence on an individual's behavior.

Attitudes are shown by bias, preconceived ideas, convictions, feelings, emotions, hopes, and fears. Attitudes may be either general or specific. For example, a young woman might express herself to be pro-union when talking with a group of friends, but when she is asked to join a white collar union she might refuse. Hence she has expressed a favorable general attitude, but has reversed her attitude when faced with the specific situation of becoming a union member.

An attitude is characterized by three things. The first of these is an object, which, in the case of this study, is white collar unions. The second characteristic of an attitude is a direction. In this instance the direction is a pro-union or an anti-union attitude. The third mark of an attitude is its intensity. The intensity measures how great or insignificant the attitude is in an individual.

Measurement of attitudes is a science of its own. The

measurement of direction and intensity is a complicated and often arbitrary business. The intent of this thesis is to approximate the refinements of the attitude science.

An attitude is expressed as an opinion. As an example, an employee who has an unfavorable attitude toward a company will express a series of unfavorable opinions about that company. If unfavorable opinions are given, they reflect an unfavorable attitude.

Essentially, the approach used in this study was to obtain opinions in an effort to discover the attitudes of young women toward white collar unions. To do this, a questionnaire was developed and administered to the sample.

Response to the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to Group A on May 13, 1957, during the homeroom period. On this date twelve members of the class were absent from school. Of the remaining one hundred and forty-eight students, one hundred and thirty-nine, or ninety-four per cent, completed and returned their questionnaires.

Before the questionnaire was handed out to Group A, a brief introduction was given by each of the five homeroom teachers. This introduction stated that the questions and answers were to be used for material in a master's degree thesis. The girls were told that they need not fill out a questionnaire or that they need not sign the questionnaire if they did fill one out.

The heading of the questionnaire was read aloud to each class. The heading, quoted in full, follows:

"This questionnaire seeks your opinion of WHITE COLLAR UNIONS. Please read the questions carefully and answer them honestly. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer each question in the space provided."

Questionnaires were mailed to Group B on May 14, 1957. A mimeographed note was attached to each questionnaire briefly stating the purpose of the query and asking the individual's help in the project. A stamped envelope was inclosed, addressed to the school.

In all, one hundred and forty-one questionnaires were mailed to Group B. Of these, four were returned with erroneous addresses. Of the one hundred and thirty-seven questionnaires that reached Group B, thirty-four were completed and returned. This is a 24.8 per cent response.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire developed for this study contains five major sections or parts. Each of the sections deals with a specific phase of the problem. These five parts are:

Part One - Permanence in the Work Force

Part Two - Work Satisfaction

Part Three - General Attitudes Toward Unions

Part Four - Specific Attitudes Toward White Collar Unions

Part Five - Derivation of Attitudes of the Sample

The entire questionnaire contains forty-four questions that have been grouped into one of the five parts. Each part is outlined in detail in this chapter. The questions used in each section are listed, and the point evaluation system is explained by section.

Part One - Permanence in the Work Force

Statistically, the relative permanence of any given portion of the work force can be determined with some degree of accuracy. Data on women's employment given in many standard references illustrates this fact.

The first section of the questionnaire, however, deals with the topic of permanence in the work force for a different reason. The attitude of the young woman clerical worker toward a union will be influenced by how long she thinks she will remain in the labor force. If she intends her job to be merely a pastime between school and marriage, she may be reluctant to join a union. Once she believes she will spend the rest of her life as a worker she may be more likely to want to improve her position and embrace a union.

This first section contains seven questions. The individuals in the sample were asked to give their opinions on this subject of their permanence in the work force. Two of the seven questions were eliminated from the evaluation of the questionnaire because they were ambiguous as stated and did not help answer the question asked. Each of the remaining questions used in this

section was rated subjectively by the author and evaluated on the basis of this rating. The questions and ratings follow:

Permanence in Work Force Questions

(1) Do you think you will make a career of business?	1.0
(2) Would you rather have a career than get married?	1.5
(3) Do you have to support yourself?	.5
(4) Do you have to support someone at home	1.0
(5) Do you ever want to become a supervisor?	<u>.5</u>
Total Points	3.5

The two questions appearing on the questionnaire but omitted from the evaluation are;

- (1) Do you think that a woman can be married and hold a job?
- (2) If you get married, do you think that you will continue to work?

Evaluation of Part One

If an individual intended to remain permanently in the labor force, and she answered all of the questions in Part One with that intention, she would be given 3.5 points. If, however, the point rating for the individual was 1.75 or less then the individual was considered to have the intention of remaining in the labor market only temporarily.

Approximately two-thirds of the sample indicated that they consider themselves in the labor market only temporarily. The

specific results of the evaluation are shown below.

TABLE II

DEGREE OF WORK FORCE PERMANENCE OF THE SAMPLE

Group	Per cent of the sample who intend to remain	
	Temporarily in labor force	Permanently in labor force
Group A	62.6%	37.4%
Group B	70.5%	29.5%
Weighted average ²	64.0%	36.0%

Part Two - Work Satisfaction

The second part of the questionnaire deals with the subject of work satisfaction. Lack of this has been considered one of the primary motivations for a union's existence.

A pioneer of white collar organization states, "Before any organization can come into being there must be some general condition of insecurity, some necessity, some appealing objective, or some unjust or irritable condition or circumstance to motivate and to stimulate the interest of prospective

²The method of computing the weighted average here and wherever shown in the text is outlined in Appendix II.

membership"³

An individual's work satisfaction is an important aspect of the attitude the individual will have toward a union. If a girl has a high degree of satisfaction in her work, she will be less likely to join a union because she will have few grievances that need to be resolved. If a girl is very dissatisfied at work, she has a number of recourses, one of which is to join a union if one is available.

Work satisfaction is concerned with many facets of the job itself and the job situation. The relationship of the individual to her boss or supervisor is one of the most important aspects of work satisfaction.

The questions used in this part probe the degree of work satisfaction; the questions are listed below.

Work Satisfaction Questions

- (1) Do you intend to keep your present job after graduation?
- (2) Do you think that you are paid enough for the work that you do?
- (3) Do you think that you could get a better job someplace else?
- (4) Is your office a pleasant place to work?
- (5) Is there any dissatisfaction in your office?
- (6) Is the supervisor at the office courteous?

³Leo F. Bollens, White Collar or Moose? (New York, 1947), p.1.

- (7) Do the other people in the office like your supervisor?
- (8) Do you work closely with your supervisor?
- (9) Is your supervisor fair when dealing with people?
- (10) Does your supervisor avoid favorites in the office?

Evaluation of Part Two

In the evaluation of Part Two, work satisfaction, each question used was given a 1.0 value. The number of questions an individual answered expressing a favorable opinion toward work indicated a certain degree of satisfaction. Three degrees of work satisfaction were established, and word equivalents for each were assigned, as follow:

Degree of Work Satisfaction

Number of Favorable Answers Given		Word Equivalents
Over	Incl.	
	3	Dissatisfied
3	7	Satisfied
7	10	Very satisfied

These categories of work satisfaction are arbitrary. However, they will serve to indicate the general degree of satisfaction of the sample.

The results of this evaluation are shown in Table III. ⁴

⁴
Table III, p. 30.

TABLE III
DEGREE OF WORK SATISFACTION OF THE SAMPLE

Group	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Group A	4.6%	37.4%	58.0%
Group B	9.4%	25.0%	65.6%
Weighted average	5.5%	35.0%	59.5%

Part Three - General Attitudes Toward Unions

The central portion of the questionnaire concerns itself directly with the problem of the thesis; that is, the opinions of the sample toward unions in general and white collar unions in particular. This part, and Part Four, search the specific opinions and resultant attitudes on this subject. The questions in these two parts were intermingled in the questionnaire and asked from different points of view. All this had been done in an effort to obtain valid questions that would produce reliable opinions and attitudes.

Six questions were asked in Part Three to ascertain the opinions of the sample toward unions and the labor movement in general. If a clerical worker expresses pro-union opinions in this section, her attitude is pro-union, at least to the extent that she thinks labor unions are good and necessary in

the American economy. The questions are general in nature and concern those areas that would have a bearing on an attitude.

The questions asked in Part Three follow.

General Attitude Questions

- (1) Would you advise a friend of yours to join a labor union?
- (2) Do you think that unions help their members?
- (3) Do you feel that labor unions are good for the country?
- (4) Do you feel that it is proper for a woman to join a labor union?
- (5) Do you think that most unions are honestly run?
- (6) Do you think that unions are for those without much skill?

Evaluation of General Attitudes Toward Unions

The number of answers determined in which of the three groups the individual was classified.

General Attitudes Toward Labor Unions

Number of Pro-Union Opinions		Word Equivalents
Over	Incl.	
	2	Disapprove of unions
2	4	Tolerant of unions
4	6	Approve of unions

Each of the six questions in this part were given a 1.0 value. This rating was subjectively selected by the author to approximate the intensity of the attitudes and opinions

expressed by the sample.

The individuals in the sample stated that in general they approve of unions. Only one-quarter of the entire sample expressed anti-union opinions. Perhaps the most significant point to be noted in Table IV is that Group B expressed a more distinct degree of anti-union opinion than did Group A. In other words, the alumnae who have been working longer than the student group are less approving of unions.

TABLE IV
GENERAL ATTITUDES OF THE SAMPLE
TOWARD LABOR UNIONS

Group	Disapprove of unions	Tolerant of unions	Approve of unions
Group A	20.8%	19.4%	59.8%
Group B	38.2%	20.6%	41.2%
Weighted average	24.3%	19.7%	56.0%

Part Four - Specific Opinions Toward White Collar Unions

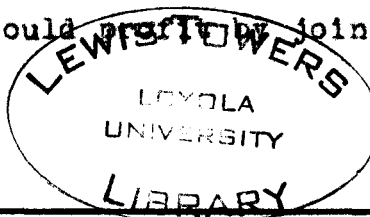
Herein lies the heart of the problem. What are the specific opinions of the sample toward white collar unions? Part Four attempts to obtain the answer (opinions) to this question. Twelve questions were asked that specifically probed the individual and her attitudes. These questions ranged from the direct

query on the topic to the indirect question concerning some phase of the attitude.

It is entirely possible that an individual can express general opinions in one direction and specific opinions in the opposite direction when asked questions that pertain to her directly. This part of the questionnaire deals with the specific opinions of clerical workers' toward white collar unions. The questions were designed to pinpoint the relationship of the white collar worker and her attitude toward wages, job security, promotion, informal organization in the office and the need for a white collar union.

Attitudes Toward White Collar Union Questions

- (1) would join a white collar union yourself?
- (2) Do you think that a union could get higher wages for you?
- (3) Do you feel that a union could represent your complaint to your supervisor better than you yourself could?
- (4) Would you go on strike to settle a serious office problem?
- (5) Would you be the first to join a union in your office?
- (6) Would you join the union if everyone else belonged?
- (7) Would you work for a company that made you join a union?
- (8) Do you feel that you could profit by joining a union?



- (9) Is there a need for a white collar union in your office?
- (10) Do you think that you would be promoted faster if you did not belong to a union?
- (11) Do you think that a union could win enough of a wage raise to pay your union dues?
- (12) Would you go to meetings at the union hall if you were a member?

Evaluation of the Specific Attitudes Toward white Collar Unions

As in the preceding parts of the questionnaire, each question was rated and evaluated by establishing the number of pro-union opinions given. Each of the twelve questions were given a 1.0 rating and grouped as indicated below.

Specific Opinion Groups

Number of pro-union opinions given		Word equivalents
Over	Incl.	
	3	Strongly disapprove of white collar unions
3	6	Disapprove of white collar unions
6	9	Approve of white collar unions
9	12	Strongly approve of white collar unions

Such a grouping of opinions allows a more definitive treatment of this part of the questionnaire. The results of the evaluation are displayed in Table V.⁵

⁵Table 5, p. 35.

TABLE V
DEGREE OF APPROVAL OF WHITE COLLAR UNIONS

Group	Strongly disapprove	Disapprove	Approve	Strongly approve
Group A	31.9%	24.8%	29.8%	13.5%
Group B	48.5%	18.2%	18.2%	15.1%
Weighted average	35.1%	23.6%	27.5%	13.8%

Part Five - General Information Regarding the Attitudes of the Members of the Sample

The final section of the questionnaire in a sense completed the picture of the problem being studied. Nine questions in this part ask for the specific information regarding where the individual may have developed her opinions and attitudes expressed in the preceding parts of the questionnaire. Because the greatest proportion of the sample was composed of relatively new members of the work force, questions pertaining to management rights and prerogatives were omitted. Instead, the questions concentrate on the individual's background and beliefs. Because an attitude normally has no specific beginning or single cause, these questions concerned family, friends, schools, news media, and the direct participation in unions of members of the sample.

In general, the question asked in this part is, "where did you get your attitude toward unions?"

Derivation of Attitude Questions

- (1) Do you belong to a white collar union?
- (2) Have you ever been asked to join such a union?
- (3) Does any member of your family belong to a union?
- (4) Do they have the same opinions about unions as you do?
- (5) Do any of your friends belong to unions?
- (6) Do they have the same opinions about unions as you do?
- (7) Have you ever studied about unions in school?
- (8) Do you read the newspaper accounts of union disputes?
- (9) Do you think that newspapers are fair in dealing with unions?

Evaluation of the Attitude Background

Because of the dissimilarity of the questions in Part Five, the pattern of evaluation used in the preceding sections has been discontinued here. In its place a commentary will be used.

One of the primary facts that would shape the attitude of a clerical worker toward a union would be her participation in a white collar union. Two questions were asked on this topic. The entire sample replied that only 5.8 per cent of the group had ever been asked to join a union. In reply to the question, "Do you belong to a white collar union?" only one person out of 173 answered yes. This means that slightly more than one-half

of one per cent of the sample belonged to a labor union. Truly the sample chosen is outside of the labor union movement. Popular commentary on the problem of white collar organization seems to take for granted that white collar unions have been available to these employees. Yet, exposure of only 8.5% to union organization indicates this to be far from true.

Family and friends in labor unions might have an influence on the clerical worker's attitude toward unions. Four questions in this vein were asked. The sample indicated that sixty-six per cent of the group had relatives and forty-six per cent had friends in unions. These are rather high percentages, indicating close contact with the union movement. In answer to the question, "Do they have the same opinions about unions as you do?" the sample indicated that only thirty-nine per cent agreed with the union members of the family and thirty per cent with their unionized friends about unions. Even though contact with union members is high, the opinions and attitudes have not been influenced by this contact in the same degree.

Schools might have helped shape the attitudes of the sample. Seventy per cent said they had studied about unions in school. Little can be drawn from this question other than the fact that the remaining thirty per cent has little or no academic knowledge of the history of the labor movement.

The last two queries concerned newspapers and their accounts of union-management disputes. Seventy per cent said

that they read newspaper stories of labor disputes, and fifty-three per cent indicated that they thought newspapers were fair in dealing with unions. Again these questions were included to see how much of a live issue unions are to the clerical workers of the sample.

In Appendix I, the detailed results for each of the forty-two questions used are shown for each of the two groups studied.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY and CONCLUSION

This study of a segment of the white collar work force and attitudes of its members toward white collar unions is necessarily limited. The sample consists of 173 young women clerical workers of a total clerical work force of approximately seven million people. Thus, any conclusions herein must be restricted in scope and application. Some of the conclusions found both agree and disagree with writers in this field. These differences and agreements will be explored as the chapter progresses.

Review of the Findings

It might be well at this point to review and synthesize the findings of the study. For the purposes of evaluation, the questionnaire was broken into five parts. This presentation sufficed for the detailed analysis of clerical worker attitudes. However, the reader must remember that each part of the questionnaire emphasized only a portion of the problem. Any conclusions reached must consider all of the aspects studied here.

Part One of the query is concerned with the office girl's opinion of her permanence in the labor force. It was found

that sixty-four per cent of the sample considered themselves in the work force only temporarily. Every young girl hopes for a happy marriage and considers her work now as a pastime until she marries and leaves the office. The alumnae group showed a significantly higher percentage of girls with the opinion that they will remain only temporarily in the office.

Statistically it can be shown that women, whether by circumstance or choice, are active in the labor force in greater numbers. Yet it is important to realize that this group thinks of itself as just temporary. For a young woman who thinks this way, a union, even a white collar union, has little appeal, except perhaps for the social functions that such an organization might serve.

The work satisfaction of the clerical group studied was extremely high. Only five per cent of the sample indicated they were dissatisfied with their jobs. The proportion of dissatisfied responses given were approximately double in Group B as compared to Group A. This indicates that as a young woman remains longer in the labor force, her dissatisfaction grows.

The logical question that follows is, will the dissatisfaction be sufficiently great to warrant organization of these young women? The questionnaire asked specifically, "Do you think that you could get a better job somewhere else?" Approximately half of the sample replied that they thought they

could get a better job. Hence, the girl with a serious grievance turns not to a union for its solution, but to another job, always with the idea she will remain only temporarily in the labor force.

On the other hand, the ninety-five per cent of the sample who showed a high degree of satisfaction will not seek organization because they indicate they think there is no need for a union.

Perhaps the most important question asked the sample in this study was, "Is there a need for a white collar union in your office?" Only 7.9 per cent of Group A and 8.8 per cent of Group B answered yes to this question. Thus, lacking a real need for a union, the sample shows that it would be difficult to organize.

The general attitude of the sample toward the labor movement was divided. Nearly one-quarter of the group disapproved of unions. Another twenty per cent indicated tolerance of unions, while fifty-five per cent approved of unions. This division is difficult to explain by any one question asked.

One opinion asked for in this area of general attitudes toward labor was, "Do you feel that it is proper for a woman to join a labor union?" Here the sample indicated that 65.5 per cent of Group A and 55.9 per cent of Group B thought it proper for a woman to join a union. These results partially explode the popular theory that white collar workers consider

the union movement crude, exploitive, and below their dignity. Note again, proportionately fewer members of Group B agreed with the propriety of labor unions expressed by Group A.

In another place, the sample was asked if they thought that unions were for those without much skill. Here, thirty per cent of Group B and ten per cent of Group A answered yes. Group B again displays a more intense anti-union attitude than does Group A.

The specific attitudes of the group studied toward white collar unions presents some interesting results. Sixty per cent said they disapproved of such unions, while forty per cent approved. A comparison of the results by group shows once more that the alumnae part of the sampling indicated a ten per cent greater disapproval of white collar unions. This is the group that expressed a greater degree of work dissatisfaction, a greater tendency to consider themselves only temporarily in the labor force, and a more general anti-union opinion. The pattern seems to be that as the young woman continues to work, she becomes more dissatisfied. She does not look to a union for a solution to her dissatisfaction, but rather looks to those circumstances which will take her out of the work force.

General Conclusions

Only one girl was actually a member of a labor union. Another girl who worked for a union did not belong to one herself, nor had she been invited to join a union. Only nine

per cent of the sample, or fifteen women, had ever been asked to join a union. The sample indicates that one of the major reasons why they do not belong to a white collar labor union is that no such union has been available to them. For a majority of the group the question of joining a union is not a live one because unions have not been at hand. The problem for the clerical worker of this sample, then, is to organize a white collar union. This is a completely different problem from joining a union already available. In answer to the question, "Would you be the first to join a union in your office?" twenty per cent of Group A and eighteen per cent of Group B answered in the affirmative. When asked if they would join the union if everyone else belonged, fifty-eight per cent of Group A replied yes, while sixty-five per cent of Group B gave the same answer.

The present lack of large white collar organization, or even the attempt to organize these workers on a large scale is a valid point to remember in evaluating the results of any study in this field.

Another basis of evaluation is the fact that the successful organization of any group of workers depends upon two circumstances:

- (1) that the workers have an awareness of their problems, and,
- (2) the belief that unions can solve these problems.

Conclusions

The sample studied here indicated that, first, they had a relatively high degree of satisfaction, and, secondly, there was really no need for a union. Add to this the desire of the sample to remain only temporarily at work, and there is a difficult organizing job for a union.

The second general conclusion is that an office composed entirely of young women like these clerical workers will be difficult, if not impossible, to organize based on the opinions found herein.

Further Research

In this analysis, it seems clear that as a girl continues to work, her satisfaction with her job declines. It is not a general dissatisfaction, but a specific job dissatisfaction on the part of an individual not advancing in her work, which could motivate the acceptance of unions. That study was not made here because the sample chosen was so new to the business world.

Another area worthy of investigation is the one of the importance of job security, to the white collar worker. Again young girls who work in a city where competent clerical workers are difficult to find would not be too concerned with job security.

Both the studies of specific job satisfaction and job security are needed in the area of white collar unionization.

Future Organization

What of the future of the white collar worker and unions? There appears to be no inherent reason why, over a long period of time, white collar workers can not be organized. Attitudes can be changed and fostered by both labor and management in a kind of psychological warfare.

Foreign experiences tend to substantiate union claims that white collar workers can be organized. In Great Britain, for example, "27 per cent of all workers in commerce, distribution, banking and insurance are unionized, whereas in this country there is little or no unionization in these fields."¹ Sweden boasts of thirty per cent unionization of white collar workers. Germany also has strong white collar groups in unions.

To conjecture on the future of white collar organization in this country is fruitless. However, it may be concluded that whatever happens in terms of white collar unionization will have a great influence on the labor movement in the United States. If the white collar turns toward the union movement in great numbers, the composition of organized labor will change and perhaps the balance of power will be disrupted. If the white collar maintains its present independent position and continues to grow as a proportion of the labor force, organized labor may lose its position of power that it presently holds.

¹Burns, p. 38.

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS BY GROUP

Question	Group A		Group B	
	per cent yes	per cent no	per cent yes	per cent no
Do you think that you will make a career of business?	<u>32.6</u>	<u>66.4</u>	<u>26.5</u>	<u>73.5</u>
Do you intend to keep your present job after graduation?	<u>80.0</u>	<u>20.0</u>	<u>61.8</u>	<u>38.2</u>
Would you rather have a career than get married?	<u>9.4</u>	<u>90.6</u>	<u>11.8</u>	<u>88.2</u>
Do you have to support yourself?	<u>40.3</u>	<u>59.7</u>	<u>50.0</u>	<u>50.0</u>
Do you have to support anyone at home?	<u>9.4</u>	<u>90.6</u>	<u>5.9</u>	<u>94.1</u>
Do you think that you are paid enough for the job that you do?	<u>60.4</u>	<u>39.6</u>	<u>64.7</u>	<u>35.3</u>
Do you think that you could get a better job somewhere else?	<u>58.3</u>	<u>41.7</u>	<u>47.1</u>	<u>52.9</u>
Is your office a pleasant place to work?	<u>91.4</u>	<u>8.6</u>	<u>88.2</u>	<u>11.8</u>
Is there any dissatisfaction in your office?	<u>28.1</u>	<u>71.9</u>	<u>32.4</u>	<u>67.6</u>
Is your supervisor at the office courteous?	<u>95.7</u>	<u>4.3</u>	<u>79.4</u>	<u>20.6</u>
Do the other people in the office like your supervisor?	<u>87.8</u>	<u>12.2</u>	<u>70.6</u>	<u>29.2</u>
Do you work closely with your supervisor?	<u>55.4</u>	<u>44.6</u>	<u>79.4</u>	<u>20.6</u>
Is your supervisor fair when dealing with people?	<u>96.4</u>	<u>3.6</u>	<u>82.4</u>	<u>17.6</u>
Does your supervisor avoid favorites in the office?	<u>85.6</u>	<u>14.4</u>	<u>70.6</u>	<u>29.4</u>
Would you advise a friend of yours to join a labor union?	<u>52.5</u>	<u>47.5</u>	<u>41.2</u>	<u>58.8</u>
Would you join a white collar union yourself?	<u>54.0</u>	<u>46.0</u>	<u>41.2</u>	<u>58.8</u>

Question	Group A		Group B	
	per cent yes	per cent no	per cent yes	per cent no
Do you belong to a white collar union?	<u> </u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>2.9</u>	<u>97.1</u>
Have you ever been asked to join such a union?	<u>5.0</u>	<u>95.0</u>	<u>8.8</u>	<u>91.2</u>
Do you think that a union could get higher wages for you?	<u>60.4</u>	<u>39.6</u>	<u>47.1</u>	<u>52.9</u>
Do you think that unions help their members?	<u>77.7</u>	<u>22.3</u>	<u>55.9</u>	<u>44.1</u>
Do you feel that labor unions are good for the country?	<u>79.1</u>	<u>20.9</u>	<u>52.9</u>	<u>47.1</u>
Do you feel that a union could represent your complaint to your supervisor better than you yourself could?	<u>46.8</u>	<u>53.2</u>	<u>23.5</u>	<u>76.5</u>
Do you feel that it is proper for a woman to join a labor union?	<u>65.5</u>	<u>34.5</u>	<u>55.9</u>	<u>44.1</u>
Would you go on strike to settle a serious office problem?	<u>32.4</u>	<u>67.6</u>	<u>29.4</u>	<u>70.6</u>
Would you be the first to join a union in your office?	<u>20.9</u>	<u>79.1</u>	<u>17.6</u>	<u>82.4</u>
Would you join the union if everyone else belonged?	<u>58.3</u>	<u>41.7</u>	<u>64.7</u>	<u>35.3</u>
Would you work for a company that made you join a union?	<u>36.7</u>	<u>63.3</u>	<u>47.1</u>	<u>52.9</u>
Do you think that most labor unions are honestly run?	<u>63.3</u>	<u>36.7</u>	<u>44.1</u>	<u>55.9</u>
Do you feel that you could profit by joining a union?	<u>57.6</u>	<u>42.4</u>	<u>29.4</u>	<u>70.6</u>
Is there a need for a white collar union in your office?	<u>7.9</u>	<u>92.1</u>	<u>8.8</u>	<u>91.2</u>
Do you think that you would be promoted faster if you did not belong to a union?	<u>25.2</u>	<u>74.8</u>	<u>47.1</u>	<u>52.9</u>
Do you ever want to become a supervisor?	<u>48.2</u>	<u>51.8</u>	<u>23.5</u>	<u>76.5</u>
Do you think that a union could win enough of a wage raise to pay your union dues?	<u>39.6</u>	<u>60.4</u>	<u>35.3</u>	<u>64.7</u>
Do you think that unions are for those without much skill?	<u>10.8</u>	<u>89.2</u>	<u>29.4</u>	<u>70.6</u>
Would you go to meetings at the union hall if you were a member?	<u>74.8</u>	<u>25.2</u>	<u>55.9</u>	<u>44.1</u>
Does any member of your family belong to a union?	<u>65.5</u>	<u>34.5</u>	<u>67.6</u>	<u>32.4</u>

Question	Group A		Group B	
	per cent		per cent	
	yes	no	yes	no
Do they have the same opinions about unions as you do?	<u>36.7</u>	<u>63.3</u>	<u>47.1</u>	<u>52.9</u>
Do any of your friends belong to a union?	<u>49.6</u>	<u>50.4</u>	<u>67.6</u>	<u>32.4</u>
Do they have the same opinions about unions as you do?	<u>30.2</u>	<u>69.8</u>	<u>29.4</u>	<u>70.6</u>
Have you ever studied about unions in school?	<u>71.2</u>	<u>28.8</u>	<u>70.6</u>	<u>29.4</u>
Do you read the newspaper accounts of labor disputes?	<u>69.1</u>	<u>30.9</u>	<u>73.5</u>	<u>26.5</u>
Do you think that newspapers are fair in dealing with unions?	<u>53.2</u>	<u>46.8</u>	<u>52.9</u>	<u>47.1</u>

APPENDIX II

DEVELOPMENT OF WEIGHTED AVERAGE

The weighted average shown in various parts of the text of of this thesis was developed in the following manner:

Group	Number of Respondents	Per cent of total
Group A	139	80.3%
Group B	34	19.7%
Total	<u>173</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

Therefore the weighted average or arithmetic mean can be obtained by employing the following formula:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \text{Per cent} & & & & \\ \text{Weighted} & & & & \\ \text{Average} & \text{equals} & \text{Group A} & \text{plus} & \text{Group B} \\ & & \text{percentage} & & \text{percentage} \\ & & \text{times .803} & & \text{times .197} \end{array}$$

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